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Viewing cable 06RIYADH6520, ANTI-BUSH POEM EPITOMIZES CURRENT SAUDI PUBLIC MOOD

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06RIYADH6520**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06RIYADH6520	2006-08-16 12:29	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Riyadh

Appears in these articles:

[not](#)
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VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRH #6520/01 2281229
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 161229Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0655
INFO RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 7579

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 006520

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/16/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SCUL](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: ANTI-BUSH POEM EPITOMIZES CURRENT SAUDI PUBLIC MOOD

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) BACKGROUND: Poetry runs in the blood of the Saudi

people. They have historically utilized poetry to express public opinion over social, political, and cultural issues. They also use poetry to curry favor with their rulers, local and regional, as well as share their criticisms in an open forum. Throughout the history of Saudi Arabia, there have typically been two categories of poets: (1) al-Madih, poets specializing in tributes and praise, and (2) al-Hija, poets specializing in satire and critique. In light of recent events, more poets from the al-Hija than the al-Madih category are publishing their work, airing their grievances about regional events. Saudi culture and custom allow poets greater latitude and frankness than that accorded to political commentators or critics, due to poets' greater prestige and traditional status as spokesmen for popular opinion and speakers of "truth" to the elite. END BACKGROUND.

¶2. (C) On August 13, columnist Saad Al Bawardi published a poem entitled "Letter to Bush" in Al-Jazeera newspaper, which condemns the U.S. President and U.S. foreign policy regarding Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq. Using strong rhetoric and metaphor, he expressed the anger and frustration currently felt by many Saudis toward the Bush administration. Al-Jazeera journalists told Riyadh contacts that their newspaper is receiving many angry letters voicing opposition to the U.S., but due to space constraints, they are able to publish very few. This poem is noteworthy as it was the first one of its kind published in a mainstream newspaper since the start of the Lebanon crisis.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: In classical Arabic poetry, there are fixed rules for couplets and rhyme. This poem, however, is written in a more modern style influenced by western free verse, although it is still filled with much sophisticated rhyming and alliteration. While the poem is not violent in tone, its message is harsh and reflects the increasing criticism by the Saudi people of U.S. policies in the region. Due to the inherent constraints encountered in translating literary verse from Arabic to English, the following translation is an approximation of the original text. END COMMENT.

¶4. (U) BEGIN TRANSLATED TEXT OF POEM:

Sorry if I have exceeded my limits
And asked you for a response
Is the one who asks for a "right" a "terrorist?"
Does Palestine-- the occupied land
Have no people or freedom?
Do those who immigrated to it from Poland, Russia or America
Have the legitimate right to the land?
The legitimate right to expel the inhabitants of the land
As if they were red Indians?
Chased and driven out with malignity and fiery clusters of
anger
From their land
Torn apart and divided
To dilute the case of having a "right?"

You promised the people of the Middle East of freedom
What freedom? And for Whom?
Freedom of the herdsman? Or the right of the herd?
A creative freedom of chaos?
Bush, Is there a code of ethics for chaos?
Or is chaos but oppression and coffins?
Ask the Statue of Liberty in New York
If it would answer you
It would have answered in anger and wailing
(Freedom is not built by injustice and skulls
Freedom would never be justly served by a tyrant)

Bush
Weapons of mass destruction that never existed
Was your excuse for invading the land of Iraq
To destroy Iraq
You left in it thousands of corpses, pain and divisions

Bodies torn by white phosphorous
If not plagued by cancerous diseases...
Tens of deaths every day
And your soldiers around the dead smiling
And your soldiers torturing
What freedom do you speak of?

In Lebanon your stupid dummy (Israel)
Took over the matter while you are the actor
Thousands upon thousands of missiles
Of bombs
Thrown by Israel with the hatred of killers
Leaving no stones no trees
No people or animals
Even the roads for those who want to run for safety
Were destroyed and were not saved
From the tyranny of the occupier...nor longer
There are any roads
Those who want to flee would only die

You did not do justice to a free and democratic Lebanon
You didn't have mercy on Lebanon of the varied denomination
and religions
You left the summer wind of death blowing in Lebanon
You were the one who gave the orders
But not the one who ordered the killing to stop
What did you give since you came?
Our big world is oppressed...scared
You said big exaggerated words:
"If you are not with us you are against us"
Which terrorist should be crushed?
Is the whole world a terrorist but you?
Bush, you are not an infallible prophet?
You have money, you have influence and you have power
But you don't have the Rightness
You don't follow the Truth
Let the other live without your guardianship
We know that the UN has become American
Rice is hers
Bolton orders and he gets answered
Bush, things will not stay the same
There isn't in the dictionary of freedom
A herdsman and a herd!

END TRANSLATED TEXT.
OBERWETTER